

September 25, 2008

**Attention: Owners and Operators of Schools, Private Schools, and Day Nurseries**

**Re: O. Reg 243/07: 2007 Lead Data Results Release**

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I am pleased to present the results from the 2007 testing for lead in drinking water at public schools, private schools and day nurseries. The findings clearly show the majority of flushed samples taken at these facilities met Ontario's standard for lead levels in drinking water.

These results are the outcome of a detailed analysis of thousands of tests completed by public schools, private schools and day nurseries in response to Ontario's regulation (O. Reg. 243/07) requiring these facilities to sample their drinking water for lead every year.

The data gathered in the first year of testing provide us with a better picture of the scope of the issue in schools, private schools, and day nurseries across the province. The 2007 results indicate four key findings:

- **Flushing works.** In all three facility types, lead concentration in drinking water was consistently lower in samples taken after flushing. The data also support the reduction of flushing from daily to weekly for facilities with plumbing installed after 1990.
- **Overall results are positive.** Ninety-four per cent of flushed samples taken at public schools, private schools, and day nurseries met the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard (ODWQS) of 10 µg/L. In cases where samples exceeded the provincial standard, changes to the facility's flushing protocol, plumbing modifications or resampling generally resolved the problems.
- **Good compliance.** Overall, I am pleased with the response during the first year of sampling - public schools and day nurseries showed excellent compliance with respect to collecting samples. While over half of the private schools did not sample during the 2007 period, we have now implemented a plan to see an even better rate of compliance in 2008. We're continuing our education and outreach initiatives, and this year we're inspecting every private school in the province to ensure that operators are aware of regulatory requirements, and are complying with them.
- **Geographic Distribution of Exceedances.** The data indicate exceedances of the provincial standard happened throughout the province, and were not limited to certain areas.

For more complete details about the 2007 sampling results go to <http://www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater/254060.pdf> on the *Drinking Water Ontario* website ([www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater](http://www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater)). In summary, the 2007 results highlights are:

#### **Public School Results**

- Ninety-nine per cent (5042/5093) of all public schools regulated under O. Reg. 243/07 sampled for lead.
- Ninety-one per cent of all public schools submitting samples were below the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard of 10 µg/L after flushing.

#### **Private School Results**

- Forty-four per cent (341/771) of all private schools regulated under O. Reg. 243/07 sampled for lead.
- Ninety-five per cent were below the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard of 10 µg/L after flushing.

#### **Day Nursery Results**

- Ninety-two per cent (3329/3620) of all day nurseries regulated under O. Reg. 243/07 sampled for lead.
- Ninety-seven per cent were below the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard of 10 µg/L after flushing.

Moving forward, we are building on the experience of the first year of testing and have paid particular attention to the ongoing feedback we have received from operators of public and private schools and day nurseries on regulatory requirements over this past year. The Ministry of the Environment will continue to work with the ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services to ensure the coordination of information, and with the local Medical Officers of Health to resolve ongoing lead problems where they occur. Just as many of you are wrapping up your sampling for 2008, the ministry is gearing up for another round of analysis for this year's results.

If you have not yet submitted your 2008 results, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that sampling in schools and private schools was to be completed by August 15. Day nurseries are required to complete 2008 sampling by October 31. You play an important role in helping ensure the health and safety of the children in your care, and we look forward to working with you again this year.

Should you need additional information about lead in drinking water and your responsibilities under O. Reg. 243/07, see the *Drinking Water Ontario* website at [www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater](http://www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater).



Keith West  
Chief Drinking Water Inspector